

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2049

DIA WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL MADRAS

USLOMCFOH

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 14671

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, PFOR, PINS, IN,NP, CH, MPOL

SUBJ: SINO-INDIAN BORDER INCIDENT

REF: STATE 260198

1. DEPARTMENT HAS UNDEOUBTEDLY NOTED NOVEMBER 4 AFP REPORT
DATELINED PEKING WHICH QUOTES AN INDIAN EMBASSY SPOKESMAN
AS DENYING THAT SIX INDIAN SOLDIERS CROSAPD THE TULUNG
PASS NORTHWARDS. THE REPORT FURTHER QUOTES THE SPOKESMAN
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AS STATING THAT THE CHINESE AMBUSH WAS SPRUNG "500 METERS

SOUTH OF TULUNG" ON THE BORDER BETWEEN INDIA AND TIBET AND THEREFORE "IN INDIAN TERRITORY;" THAT THE CHINESE WERE "PENETRATING" INDIAN TERRITORY; AND THAT THE PENETRATION IMPLIED A "CHANGE IN CHINA'S POSITION" ON THE BORDER QUESTION.

2. A SENIOR INDIAN MILITARY INTELLIGENCE OFFICER TOLD THE EMBASSY'S DATT NOV 5 THAT TULUNG PASS WAS VERY CLEAR AND MARKED OFF BY A DISTINCTIVE SHALE CLIFF. ACCORDING TO THE INDIAN OFFICER, THE CHINESE HAD MOVED UP A COMPANY TO THE PASS AND DETACHED A PLATOON WHICH HAD ERECTED STONE WALLS ON THE INDIAN SIDE OF THE PASS AND FROM THESE POSITIONS FIRED SEVERAL HUNDRED ROUNDS AT THE INDIAN PATROL, (FROM THE 25 BATTALION STRONG PARAMILITARY ASSAM RIFLES). FOUR OF THE INDIANS HAD GONE INTO A LEADING POSITION WHILE TWO (THE ONES WHO ESCAPED) REMAINED BEHIND. (COMMENT; THIS VERSION STRONGLY SUGGESTS THAT THE FOUR INDIANS WHO WERE KILLED PROBABLY DIED IN THE CHINESE BARRAGE OF FIRE, BUT BY "TORTURE" AFTER BEING CAPTURED AS AN EARLIER INDIAN OFFICER'S REPORT ALLEGED.) THE SENIOR INDIAN MILITARY INTELLIGENCE OFFICER EMPHASIZED THAT THE SOLDIERS ON THE INDIAN PATROL WERE FROM THE AREA AND HAD PATROLLED THAT SAME REGION MANY TIMES BEFORE.

3. GROUND RULES: ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCES, IN BOTH LADAKH AND ARUNACHAL PRADESH, THE INDIANS HAVE BEEN PATROLLING UP TO THE "LINE OF CONTROL" FOR MANY YEARS. IN ARUNACHAL, EXCEPT FOR THE KENZEMANE, LONGJU AND WALONG BORDER ENCLAVES, THE CHINESE "LINE OF CONTROL" COINCIDES WITH THE MCMAHON LINE (IT WAS IN THESE THREE AREAS THAT THE PRE-1962 WAR BORDER CLASHES TOOK PLACE) AND INDIAN FORCES THEREFORE PATROL UP TO THE BORDER.

4. IN LADAKH, THE INDIAN ARMY USES SMALL GROUPS OF THE RAW RUN INDO-TIBETAN BORDER POLICE AND THE LOCALLY RECRUITED LADAKHI SCOUTS TO MAN THE FORWARD POSITIONS BEYOND THE LADAKH RANGE TOWARD AKSAI CHIN (BUT SHORT OF THE KARAKORUM) AND IN THE INDIAN CONTROLLED AREAS NEAR THE POINT WHERE THE UNDUS ENTERS TIBET FROM INDIA. IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH, AS DESCRIBED IN DAO REPORT NO. 6 844 0172 74 DATED 25 NOV. 1974 THE INDIAN ARMY USES THE ASSAM RIFLES TO

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PATROL AT OR NEAR THE BORDER OR TO MAN BORDER POSTS. THESE PERSONNEL, SOME RECRUITED IN ARUNACHAL ITSELF, ARE LOOKED ON AS AN "EARLY WARNING" FORCE. REGULAR INDIAN ARMY UNITS ARE STATEIONED CONSIDERABLY BEHIND THESE POSITIONS.

5. WHILE PLACING THE CHINESE "CHECKPOINT" PERSONNEL IN THE SAME CATEGORY AS THE "FRONTIER GUARDS" THAT OVERRAN MOST

OF NEFA IN 1962, WE REMAIN PUZZLED AS TO WHY THE CHINESE DESCRIBE THE "PERSONNEL OF THE CIVILIAN CHECKPOST AT CHUNA IN TIBET" AS THE FORCE THAT FIRED ON THE INDIANS. CHUNA AT 12,000 FT. APPEARS TO BE A TINY WAY STATION ON THE WAY TO THE TOP OF THE TULUNG PASS ON THE INDIAN SIDE AND MAY NOT EVEN BE POPULATED DURING MOST MONTHS OF THE YEAR. THE CHINESE DESIGNATION OF CHUNA AS A "CIVILIAN CHECKPOST" MAY RELATE TO THE SET OF 70 CIVILIAN CHECKPOSTS THE CHINESE ANNOUNCED (NOVEMBER 21, 1962) THEY WOULD CREATE WITHIN THE 20 KM ZONE ON THE CHINESE SIDE OF THE LINE OF CONTROL FOLLOWING THE 1962 BORDER WAR. THE ANNOUNCED OBJECTIVE OF THE CHECKPOSTS WAS "TO FORESTALL THE ACTIVITIES OF SABOTEURS AND MAINTAIN ORDER." A CHINESE DIPLOMAT IN DELHI ON NOVEMBER 4 EXPLAINED TO AN EMBASSY ASSISTANT ARMY ATTACHE THAT CHUNA IS THE NAME OF THE TIBETAN ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT ENCOMPASSING THE PASS. (HE REFERRED TO IT AS A "COUNTY".) HE SAID THIS DISTRICT IS DISTINCT FROM THE HAMLET OF CHUNA ON THE INDIAN SIDE OF THE FRONTIER. EMBASSY MAPS, HOWEVER, SHOW NO SETTLEMENT FOR TEN MILES BEYOND THE CHINESE SIDE OF THE BORDER. THE NEAREST DISTRICT SEAT APPEARS TO BE TSONA AT 27-59N X 91-59E BEYOND THE BUMLA PASS ABOVE TOWANG.

6. HISTORICAL NOTE: THE TULUNG PASS WAS ONE OF THE MORE REMOTE AND LESS USED PASSES IN NORTHWESTERN ARUNACHAL PRADESH BEFORE THE INTERNATIONAL BORDER WAS CLOSED. MOST TRADE AND TRAFFIC ROUTES ARE SOME 20-30 MILES TO THE WEST ALONG THE NYAMJANG RIVER ROUTE WHICH THE DALAI LAMA USED TO ESCAPE TIBET IN 1959, AND THE BUMLA PASS DIRECTLY ABOVE THE MAJOR INDIAN ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER OF TAWANG, AND THROUGH WHICH THE CHINESE CONSTRUCTED A ROAD DOWN TO TAWANG DURING THE 1962 CONFLICT. DURING THE SECOND PHASE (NOVEMBER 15-21) OF THEIR 1962 OFFENSIVE, CONFIDENTIAL

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THE CHINESE USED THE TULUNG - AND THE TSELA PASS BELOW IT - AS THE CHANNEL FOR AN ENVELOPING TROOP MOVEMENT DOWN TO THE BOMDI LA PASS THAT SHATTERED INDIAN RESISTANCE IN THE WESTERN PART OF THE NEFA THEATER. ALTHOUGH THE CHINESE STILL APPEAR TO BE FOLLOWING THEIR POLICY OF ENFORCING THE "STATUS QUO" IN RESPECT TO THE "ACTUAL LINE OF CONTROL" ALONG THE SINO-INDIAN BOUNDARY PENDING NEGOTIATIONS, THEY APPARENTLY STILL LAY CLAIM TO ARUNACHAL PRADESH DOWN TO THE FOOTHILLS. PREVIOUSLY REFERENCED DAO REPORT SITES AN INDIAN GENERAL IN THE NE AS STATING THAT CHINESE PARAMILITARY/PROPAGANDA TEAMS OCCASIONALLY CROSS THE LINE OF CONTROL TO CONDUCT PROPAGANDA SESSIONS ON THE INDIAN SIDE. SAXBE

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